

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER MAKES RENEWED APPEAL FOR
RELAXATION US ARMS EMBARGO

REF: LISBON 173

SUMMARY: IN LONG INTERVIEW, GOP FONMIN MADE DIRECT
PITCH FOR REVISION ARMS EMBARGO AS CONCERNS DEFENSIVE
WEAPONS AGAINST AIR AND TANK ATTACKS BY FOREIGN
INVADERS AND PRESENTED RATIONALE THAT ORIGINAL EMBARGO
BASED ON NON-INTERFERENCE IN PURELY DOMESTIC INSURREC-
TIONS IN WHICH FOREIGN STATES SHOULD NOT INTERFERE.
HEAVY RELIANCE AS BEFORE ON PUBLIC OPINION HERE, NOW
REINFORCED BY EXTREME RESTLESSNESS LEADERS OF ARMED
FORCES.

PRESENTATION SUBSTANTIVE. NO COMPLAINTS AS
BEFORE ABOUT BEING IGNORED. PORTUGAL WOULD BE MUCH
BETTER OFF TODAY IF 1971 AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REJECTED
BY CONGRESS VIA CASE AMENDMENT. SINCE AGREEMENT IN
EFFECT, HE DOES NOT REGRET GOP ACTION IN AIRLIFT, BUT
IT HAS BROUGHT NOTHING BUT GRIEF. NON-RENEWAL WOULD BE
VERY POPULAR HERE AND (FOR INCOSISTENT REASONS) GOP
WOULD NOT SUFFER FROM LACK OF US SUPPORT. END SUMMARY

1. SATURDAY MORNING I ACCOMPANIED DR. DAVID ABSHIRE ON
COURTESY VISIT TO FONMIN PATRICIO IN CONNECTION ABSHIRE'S

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FORTHCOMING CHAIRMANSHIP OF BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL
BROADCASTING (RADIO FREE EUROPE HAS IMPORTANT FACILITIES

HERE). STATUTORY QUARTER-HOUR EXTENDED TO AN HOUR AND A QUARTER BY TIRADE BY FONMIN RE LAJES.

2. FONMIN REPEATED ALL ARGUMENTS REPORTED IN REFTTEL EXCEPT THAT HE NO LONGER COMPLAINS OF BEING IGNORED BY SECRETARY'S FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE. I WILL THEREFORE ONLY SUMMARIZE POINTS WHICH ARE EITHER NEW OR NEWLY EMPHASIZED BY FONMIN:

3. WHAT LITTLE EXCUSE EVER EXISTED FOR US ARMS EMBARGO HAS DISAPPEARED. WHILE GOP DISAGREED WITH EMBARGO IN 1961, AT LEAST THERE WAS THE EXCUSE OF NON-INTERVENTION BY A FOREIGN POWER IN PURELY DOMESTIC INSURRECTION. THIS CLEARLY DOES NOT APPLY, EITHER IN INTERNATIONAL LAW OR IN US POLICY AS APPLIED ELSEWHERE, TO INVASION OF TERRITORY OF AN ALLY BY A FOREIGN POWER. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FONMIN SAID THAT MOBUTU AND SEKOU TOURE HAVE MADE OPEN THREATS AND THE POSSIBILITY IS IMMEDIATE BECAUSE QUOTE THE TANKS ARE THERE, THE AIR-CRAFT ARE THERE AND THE FOREIGN PILOTS ARE THERE UNQUOTE. TO ASK THE US FOR PURELY DEFENSIVE WEAPONS AGAINST AIR AND TAKN ATTACKS IS A VERY MODEST REQUEST. CABINDA MENTIONED AS A LIKELY POINT OF ATTACK, BUT WITHOUT EMPHASIS ON US INTERESTS THERE.

4. EFFORTS TO CREATE SOME APPRECIATION OF PROBLEMS WITH CONGRESS INCLUDED A REFERENCE BY ABSHIRE TO HIS DIFFICULTIES, AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS, IN EFFORTS TO DEFEAT THE CASE AMENDMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE REQUIRED SUBMISSION OF 1971 LAJES EXTENSION TO SENATE VOTE. DELIBERATELY MISSING THE POINT, FONMIN SAID THE BEST THING THAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO PORTUGAL WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR THAT AGREE-MENT TO BE SUBMITTED TO SENATE AND REJECTED. PUBLIC SENTIMENT THAT THIS WAS A BAD DEAL FOR GOP HAS BEEN GROWING EVER SINCE AND NOW THE MILITARY HAVE JOINED THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT FURTHER RENEWAL IS UNDESIRABLE.

5. SINCE THE 1971 EXTENSION WAS SIGNED, FONMIN

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FEELS THAT WHAT GOP DID RE MID-EAST AIRLIFT WAS RIGHT AND HE WOULD DO IT AGAIN, BUT THE EFFECTS ON PORTUGAL HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS. NOT ONLY HAVE THE ARABS ISSUED THE OIL EMBARGO, BUT AFRICAN, USSR AND PRC AID TO INSURRECTIONISTS HAS INTENSIFIED.

6. A SUGGESTION THAT FONMIN SEEMED TO BE DISREGARDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH OUR OUSTER FROM LAJES MIGHT PRODUCE A CONGRESSIONAL REACTION WHICH WOULD LOSE GOP ITS LAST INFLUENTIAL SUPPORTER IN INTERNATIONAL BODIES, PRODUCED

THE FOLLOWING REACTIONS:

(A) US SUPPORT IS HEART-WARMING, BUT IT BUTTERS NO PARSNIPS. US VOTED WITH GOP WHEN GOA WAS INVADED, BUT THAT DIDN'T SAVE GOA. NO REFERENCE HERE TO GUINEA-BISSAU, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE HE IS STILL COUNTING ON A US VETO OF UN MEMBERSHIP.

(B) ANYHOW, IT IS DEMEANING TO THE US TO SUGGEST THAT A DISAGREEMENT ABOUT LAJES WOULD AFFECT US POSITION ON OTHER ISSUES. US OBVIOUSLY SUPPORTS PORTUGAL, WHEN IT DOES, SOLELY BECAUSE IT BELIEVES PORTUGUESE POSITION IS MORALLY AND LEGALLY CORRECT, AND SURELY THIS SUPPORT WOULD BE CONTINUED. I SAID I WISHED I HAD THE SAME CONFIDENCE IN THE LOFTY MORALITY OF CONGRESS THAT HE DID AND GENTLY IMPLIED THAT WE HAD TAKEN SOME POSITIONS MORE OUT OF FRIENDSHIP FOR PORTUGAL THAN OUT OF APPROVAL OF ITS POLICIES.

7. COMMENT: ABSHIRE AND I SATISFIED FONMIN LOADED FOR BEAR AND WOULD HAVE DELIVERED HIMSELF WHETHER OR NOT I HAD BEEN THERE. HE ORIGINALLY THOUGHT ABSHIRE STILL WITH DEPARTMENT. THE CLEAR MESSAGE IS THAT GOP POSITION, IF CHANGED AT ALL, HAS STIFFENED SINCE MY FIRST INTERVIEW. THE SPECIOUSNESS OF SOME OF THE ARGUMENTS CONFIRMS OUR IMPRESSION THAT GOP FEELS IT IS NOW OR NEVER TO GET A MODIFICATION OF THE EMBARGO.
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